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Chapter 10

Replacing faith in spirits with faith in heritage

A story of the management of the Gangneung Danoje Festival

CedarBough T. Saeji

Vignette

A precisely coiffed shaman faced the audience; at her back a long altar covered with food offerings and elaborate displays of vibrantly colored paper flowers. At the center of the altar was a *seolgyeong*, cut out paper figures of the deceased, and to each side there were photos and small name tablets used in Korean memorial rituals. This *o-gu-gut*, a ritual traditionally used to send souls to the other side, was being held for all the deceased members of the Gangneung Danoje Preservation Association. The name tablets and photographs represented those who had achieved the highest rank before their passing. In front of the shaman were musicians, arranged in a U shape, with the shaman at the open end of the U and the most important musician, the player of the hourglass drum, in the center with his back to the audience. As this *o-gu-gut*, part of a celebration of the 10th anniversary of UNESCO designation for Gangneung Danoje, began to hit its stride, the shaman Kim Dongyeon chanted about Sin Seoknam, a now-deceased National Human Treasure, and one of Kim's teachers. Repeatedly she referenced cultural policy: "She protected our culture . . . wah-wah-wah," she sing-cried, "She would want to know that now we have many advanced learners . . . wah-wah-wah . . . she passed away before we got UNESCO designation . . . wah-wah-wah." Throughout this act in the ritual the UNESCO designation of Gangneung's Dano Festival was held up as a great success and achievement, something that the shamans leading the ceremony regret that the deceased never saw.

The festival continued from 3 p.m. until noon the following day as the rain beat down on the tent. It was an elaborate relay race—the hereditary shamans and musicians, related by blood and marriage, were uncles, brothers, mothers, step-mothers, sisters, sons, wives, husbands, grandmothers and grandfathers. They played music, sang, and danced in the East Coast shamanic tradition, or quietly watched from the photos on the altar. It was a phenomenal display of artistry by confident performers, neither ignoring nor catering to the video and still cameras lining the performance space. They easily code-switched between performance and announcements of a five-minute break or a request for the driver of license plate 4967 to move his vehicle. The audience of Gangneung locals and

the family members of the performers mingled during the night with students of the traditional arts, professors and policy experts. Some were spellbound, exclusively concentrating on the performers. Others chatted and drank special local *makgeolli* (a mildly alcoholic beverage), as the shamans and musicians, supporting each other's efforts, kept going through the night.

Introduction

The government of the Republic of Korea (hereafter Korea) first began to protect intangible cultural heritage on a national level in 1962 when the Cultural Property Protection Law (CPPL) came into effect. This comprehensive heritage legislation established a methodology through which the rich performative and artistic traditions of the country could be saved from extinction (or resurrected). Each certified artist was to transmit his or her skills and regularly perform or exhibit artistry. From March 2016, intangible cultural heritage was removed from the CPPL and is now governed by the Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding and Promotion Law (ICH-SPL). The implications for Korean intangible heritage managed for both preservation and promotion will become clearer with time, but it is significant that the new law was deemed necessary to bring Korean management of intangible cultural heritage into greater conformance with UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003).

What does managing Korean heritage in accordance with UNESCO's Convention look like? More than a decade later it is widely understood that UNESCO's cultural policies reveal power dynamics on local, national, and international levels (Foster 2015, see also Smith 2007). The UNESCO listing of intangible cultural heritage, in most places, carries benefits such as assistance in documentation, analysis by experts, and the creation of safeguarding plans and transmission systems, as well as raising awareness. However, Korea, a major proponent for UNESCO to pass the Convention, had already fully documented, analyzed and worked to preserve the arts since 1962. How does the Convention then benefit Korea? It strengthens 'bragging rights' for the nation and the artists, and provides some additional international performance opportunities, but this is far from the financial benefits that many imagine accrue to UNESCO-listed heritage. The Convention has been seen by many bureaucrats in Korea as a way to fly the national flag—listings as another field for competition not unlike medal counts in the Olympics—but it has also raised the understanding of heritage as a driver for tourism growth, a connection theorized by scholars such as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006).

This chapter centers on Gangneung Danoje, the Dano festival of Gangneung, a late spring event in the city of Gangneung in Korea's Gangwon Province. Having personally observed a growing touristification and commercialization of the festival between my first visit, in 1999, and second, in 2011, I conducted research in 2015 and 2016, data from which forms the basis of this chapter. This festival, which culminates each year on the seventh day of the fifth lunar month, includes

ritual and practical preparations for 50 days. Guests are encouraged to participate on the fifteenth day of the fourth lunar month to invite and welcome the mountain spirit, the state preceptor spirit, and the goddess preceptor spirit to Gangneung.[1] Riding on a festooned sacred tree, the spirits are brought down into the city. The spirits stay in Gangneung until the final ceremony concludes the festival. The main festival, which runs for a week with the midpoint marked by the day of Dano, or the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, includes an extended shamanic ceremony, a repeated Confucian ritual, a mask dance drama (Gangneung Gwanno Gamyeon'geuk) that can be staged multiple times, a market, and other activities such as games and drumming. The festival concludes when the spirits are sent back to the mountain. Gangneung Danoje collectively is motivated by belief in the three spirits, particularly the preceptor's ability to protect Gangneung, while bringing fortune and fertility—good harvests for farmers and calm seas for fishermen.

In Korea, performances of heritage in contexts that feel earthily authentic have grown difficult to find as each festival and each performance venue upgrades its facilities and grows ever more sanitized, adding glossy fliers in foreign languages, roaming translators, and tourist packages to coincide with the festival. In this case, I surmised that heritage was being commodified primarily at the behest of Gangneung City without consideration for heritage bearers, as has been the case elsewhere in Korea. I was particularly suspicious that in the wake of the festival's registration by UNESCO as Representative Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2005, the number of voices competing for control of the art may have drowned out those of the heritage bearers themselves. As a scholar of heritage policies, I have grown concerned with the erosion of heritage value and meaning as heritage is repeatedly commodified and packaged in ways that neglect its roots—the role in society (once) held by each heritage item. I have been particularly uncomfortable with the promotion of heritage that does not benefit heritage bearers (performers, craftspeople, artists) as much as governmental or commercial interests.

What I found in Gangneung was confirmation that UNESCO listing had increased the use of the festival as a driver for tourism from beyond the local region, and corresponding growth in commercial sectors of the festival. However, I also found a group that was astutely managing pressures based on the changing context of life in Korea, and protecting themselves from exploitation through careful and diplomatic interactions with the local government. Changes to the festival are being driven by the performers, and top down heritage management protocols are negotiated or rejected by performers. Interviews with cultural officials and members of the ritual's Preservation Association, government documents, and attendance at performances and the annual festival provided multiple angles from which to understand how Gangneung Danoje is adapting heritage to the needs of the present in cooperation with multiple parties. Key to the process of adaptation is the shift in meaning of the festival's central shamanic ritual—from a ritual that will bless farming and fishing, to a ritual that invigorates Gangneung's tourism sector, bestowing a mantle of unique regional identity.

Utilitarian logic and commodification of culture

Gangneung Danoje is a particularly complex item of heritage as preparations for the festival period begin months in advance. The heritage bearers for the festival are divided into the three main areas of responsibility for the performance of the festival—the ritual section is responsible for the Confucian rituals, the shamanic section is responsible for the shamanic rituals and accompanying music, and the mask dance drama section is responsible for the performance of Gangneung Gwanno Gamyeon'geuk, a mask dance drama accompanied by drumming music. The three sections collectively constitute the Gangneung Danoje Preservation Association. The entire association is under the direction of the National Human Treasure Jo Gyudon, who is from the Confucian section of the association.[2] Despite the leadership of people like Jo Gyudon, who has been part of the Preservation Association since 1967, there are important aspects that are not easily controlled by the heritage bearers—the group is dependent on outside funding. Further, under Korean law as elsewhere, "as part of the safeguarding of intangible heritage local actors are asked to surrender to experts and councils and administrators the control over their own cultural practices" (Hafstein 2015: 296). In Korea this can range from the benign—employees who work in the Gangneung Danoje Preservation Association office under the direction of the heritage bearers—to the very powerful members of the Cultural Properties Committee that chooses items of heritage for inclusion in the legal framework, and later judges ranking exams for heritage bearers. Beyond the members of this committee are the various civil servants and bureaucrats at the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) and the employees and leaders of the Gangneung City government. In 2015, the Danoje Festival was allotted a budget of 139,000,000 won (around 115,000 USD)— 90,000,000 from the national government and 49,000,000 from the city.[3] The regular performances of the mask dance drama Gangneung Gwanno Gamyeon'geuk, performed on the last Saturday of the month except during the winter, were given a further 40,000,000 budget—5,000,000 from the CHA and 35,000,000 from the city of Gangneung.

In the case of Gangneung Danoje, and other UNESCO-listed arts, another level exists—the international level. The impact of UNESCO listing on Gangneung Danoje seems to be primarily manifested in the form of pride, as shown in the opening vignette, but even that may have diminished over the years as more Korean arts have been given the same honor—the value of being on the list is determined by the exclusion of others (Hafstein 2009: 93). Competition between different groups and heritage items for the perceived status advantage of UNESCO certification has also exacerbated tensions within Korean heritage circles (Heo YH 2009), adding to the pre-existing tensions between locally certified and nationally certified heritage items.[4]

Culture, in our contemporary era, is often used as a resource. Scholars have shown the shift to an understanding that culture serves society, and that it has an economic and utilitarian imperative (Yúdice 1999: 17). It is this belief that

is at the root of the current Park Geun-hye administration's creative economy. The creative economy policy was introduced, ostensibly, to move beyond playing catch-up to the advanced countries of the world through imitation, and instead to create new growth based on innovation and entrepreneurship. Culture is turned to for uniqueness in a struggle for differentiation from the other, for excitement and color, for a mythical wellspring of ideas. In Korea no part of culture is utilized with as little consideration for stakeholders as heritage. This is closely connected to the lack of intellectual property rights protections for traditional heritage items, which are considered the collective legacy of all Koreans. There is no policy empowering culture bearers and asking for "prior informed consent" (Dalibard and Kono 2009); replicas and trinkets simplifying heritage crafts are sold, performances of heritage arts are incorporated into advertisements, and heritage imagery decorates music videos, all without consulting heritage bearers.

In practice Korean heritage has been managed for promotion of the region or the country, not for the sustenance of heritage bearers. This began as President Park Chunghee (1961–1979) established the CPPL and used heritage as a tool for building nationalism (and legitimization of his government). Scholars examining Korean heritage, both tangible and intangible, have made this argument repeatedly (see Yang JS 2003; Yim HS 2003; Howard 2006; Saeji 2014; Kendall 2014; Yun KI 2015, 2006). In recent years tourism has been a growing focus of heritage use, abundantly examined by scholars in global contexts (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; McKercher and du Cros 2002; Hashimoto 2003; Nyiri 2006; di Giovine 2009; Timothy and Nyaupane 2009) and domestically in Korea. Scholars examining the Korean case find hope for a renewed interest and engagement with heritage (Park HY 2009; Oppenheim 2011, 2008) but also frequent contradictions introduced by tourism, such as being taught to perform ancestral rites in another person's ancestral home (Moon OP 2011) and the consumption of Buddhist temple food for national identity and health, without connection to religion (Moon SS 2008).

The early institution of the CPPL essentially made items of Korean heritage into national property. Through designating vanishing music, dance, drama, game, and ritual practices as *jungyo muhyeong munhwajae* (Important Intangible Cultural *Properties*), the heritage bearers entered into a new relationship with the arts they practiced; simultaneously accepting the property principle, and relinquishing control of the heritage. At first, exposure and legitimization through granting titles were the only benefits for the heritage bearers, not unlike what UNESCO listing brings around the world, but increasingly over time the Korean government supplied funds for the arts and artists. As the state became the major, or in some cases the only, significant patron of the 'traditional' arts, artists lost their independence and market value (Howard 2016). For the Korean government, the regional, national, and UNESCO-listed heritage items are seen as something to be utilized, and the UNESCO listing has emboldened the government in appeals to consume heritage for tourism, instead of merely national or regional pride. Heritage has become, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explained, a "value-added industry" that "produces the local for export" (1995: 369), transforming

heritage into a commodity or an experience that can be consumed by people from outside that culture (Rowlands and de Jong 2007: 25).

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's argument is that through being designated heritage, an item that was no longer viable or economically beneficial is given new value through heritage's ability to exhibit "pastness," "difference" or "indigeneity" (1995: 370). This is part of a process of making locations into destinations, of being able to "import visitors to consume goods and services locally" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 373). In Korea such utilitarian logic underpins plans that turn heritage into tourist attractions and symbolic regional brands. However, as relations between people and heritage change, heritage scholars are becoming increasingly concerned about the ramifications of commodification (Pyykkonen 2012; Suntikul 2013; Aygen and Logan 2016). Some have gone so far as to call this impact UNESCO-cide, a term coined by Marco D'Eramo (2014) to characterize the impact of commercial changes on the UNESCO heritage site of Luang Prabang, Laos. Conversely, some commodification, such as ticketed performances and exhibitions, is inevitable—if the audience all lived locally, performers could still go from house to house to fundraise as was often the case in pre-modern Korea, but this is no longer practical. In cases like Gangneung, the government funds negate a need to sell tickets, but by accepting those funds the festival performers cannot begrudge appeals to tourism or the expansion of the commercial booths at the festival.

This commodification of culture is inescapable, sometimes beneficial for both heritage bearers and the larger community, and directly connected to changes in performance contexts. In this case, Gangneung (2014 population 218,369)[5] has a shrinking and aging population, and an anemic economy. Less than three hours from Seoul, it has long supported a tourism sector primarily as a summertime beach destination for Korea's largest metropolis. The entire province of Gangwon, where Gangneung city is located, is increasingly reliant on tourism, with famous national parks, and both seaside and ski resorts (Gangneung City 2014). For Gangneung, it makes sense to build on tourism through promoting hump-season events like the Danoje festival (June), a puppet festival (September) and a coffee festival (October), as well as increasing and improving the facilities for enjoying nature around Gangneung.[6] The Danoje and two new festivals are tasked with combating the overall shrinking tourist arrivals, which, according to the 2014 *Statistical Yearbook of Gangneung City*, have dropped by 24 percent, i.e., by over four million, between 2007 and 2013.[7]

The Gangneung Dano Festival has served as one of Gangneung's main attractions, but leisure activities and consumption continues to develop in Korea, such as, notably, the boom in the number and diversity of local festivals between 1990 and 2010, after local autonomy followed democratization (Jung DI 2011). As Jung Dong-Il explains, many of these new festivals were established based on business logic rather than community logic, with 450 such commercialized festivals established between 2000 and 2005. The resultant competition led to an increased commercialization of pre-existing festivals, such as Gangneung Danoje. At the

same time, Koreans are turning to experiential tourism, and new outdoor leisure activities are booming (Park and Yoon 2009; Mun CH 2009; Kaplan 2010; Moon OP 2011; Oppenheim 2011; Park *et al*. 2012). Simultaneously, outbound tourism has skyrocketed compared with previous decades,[8] and although Seoulites still escape to the beaches of the east coast, beaches on the south coast can now be reached on high-speed train lines, equalizing travel time to both coasts.

Shamanic ritual, belief, and heritage value

Visitors to the Gangneung Danoje festival are often attracted to the core shamanic elements. Shamanism has been a persistent and important facet of Korean life since before the introduction of Buddhism or Confucianism in the fourth century (Howard 1998). Shamanism has a pantheon of gods and spirits, and is amenable to religious pluralism. Koreans will employ shamanism when it is useful, but because it lacks the standard signs of religions, such as a holy book, a prophet, or a regular service, people do not generally identify as 'followers.' This is connected to the active antipathy to shamanism long shown by Korea's enthusiastic and conservative evangelical Christians. This runs the gamut from refusing to attend Gangneung Danoje, or at least staying far away from the end of the festival grounds where the shamanic rituals are held, to physical confrontations between Christian activists and shamans during ritual (Mills 2007: 12–13). The attitudes of some Christians toward shamanism have also had an impact on the performing arts and Korean heritage protection in more subtle ways, as explored by Koreanist Roald Maliangkay (2014).

When Gangneung Danoje was listed as Korean heritage in 1967, the new status elevated shamanic ritual in the face of laws prohibiting and limiting many shamanic activities, as well as centuries of official contempt for shamans and shamanism. Like other national heritage items related to shamanism, the shamans in Gangneung are *seseupmu*, or hereditary shamans, in contrast with *gangsinmu*, or charismatic, spirit-descended shamans. Hereditary shamans typically "perform rituals that address the needs of the whole community" (Mills 2007: 19–20) such as the rituals in the Danoje ceremony, while the charismatic shamans often work with individuals. The lifelong training of the hereditary shamans facilitates a secular emphasis on performance skill rather than spiritual efficacy of the shamans. Therefore, from the very start of heritage listing, shamanism-as-heritage downplayed meaning and audience belief. For the government shamanic ritual was another art form, and including it as heritage was part of Korean distinctiveness vis-à-vis Japan, both because shamanism had been politicized as a mark of distinctiveness from Japan during the colonial era (see Janelli 1986), and because, until the 1970s, Japan's protected intangible heritage was 'high' culture—not something from the very lowest margins of pre-modern culture (Thornbury 1997).

The conversion of a ritual with efficacy for believers to staged art has been commented on by many scholars of shamanism and the performing arts. For example, Park Mikyung, examining the Jindo Ssitgimgut shamanic ritual, found

enormous differences in ritual practice between her initial fieldwork in 1981 and a return visit to Jindo 20 years later (Park MK 2003). In the case of the (UNESCO-listed) Jeju Chilmeoridang Yeongdeunggut, folklorist Yun Kyoim found the shamanic ritual specialists being pushed into staged rituals that were short and much modified from the original context and content (Yun KI 2006). Yun also found that the shamanic ritual specialists on Jeju, after certification, did not perceive any positive results from UNESCO listing; instead local people, afraid of the assumed high cost of a UNESCO-certified shaman, no longer called for ritual services (Yun KI 2015: 195).

Yet, on Jeju as in Gangneung, traditional reasons for large shamanic rituals are vanishing. The office manager of the Gangneung Cultural Center, Sim Oseop, explained that with the decline in farming as a local occupation,[9] the belief in the festival and ritual had been substantially reduced (interview in Gangneung 2/15/2016). Sin Heera, an *isuja* from the shamanic section, explained that even a couple of decades earlier the audience of the shamanic rituals, loathe to give up a prime spot near the action, would sometimes pee on the ground where they sat watching the ritual, then kick dirt over the urine to soak it up. Over the course of the festival such actions would add up until the tented area for the ceremony began to stink (interview in Gangneung 11/12/2015). The shaman explained that the Dano rituals were so important to those who came that they would buy blankets and at night they would sleep where they had sat watching the ceremony. Interviewing Sim Oseop I heard almost the same story—but Sim then added:

> This is a different era—we cannot allow people to sleep at the festival because the festival organizers have to think about the safety issue. So, in the old days someone would come from someplace like Yeongju [and sleep at the site], now they have to go to a cheap hotel or public sauna to sleep. If we find someone sleeping there because they don't have money, we give them money and send them to a sauna. We have to consider safety—in the past if someone had a problem, they would know they had made a mistake, but these days it's different [they could hold us responsible] (2/15/2016).

The festival site is so large and filled with activities that many attendees never watch the shamanic rituals that were once such a large draw card. In 2016, on the most important day—Dano—I worked my way forward to a seat three feet from the shaman's stage, all while chatting with the other attendees about the festival. A few were with their friends, but many were locals who, on a Thursday morning, did not have someplace they had to be, and unsurprisingly they were predominantly senior citizens. Some attendees still lined up to briefly talk with a shaman, who would then burn a paper representing their prayer and receive a cash donation, and others approached shamans or musicians to tuck a cash offering into their clothing. As we watched, many of my neighbors claimed to simply be there because it was fun, or because they were proud of local culture. A grandmother in her early 70s told me that she comes every day, every year, without fail, but that

Figure 10.1 Seong-ju-gut in Gangneung at the Danoje Festival, June 2011.
Source: photo by the author.

her favorite part of the festival was the "standing swinging contest" (a traditional activity on Dano). Another woman with a floral scarf and recent perm shook her head and muttered disapprovingly as a (presumably inebriated) senior citizen danced unsteadily to the shamanic drums and gongs. Unlike those donating on stage, most of the audience focused on the aesthetics of the music, singing, and dancing; captivated by the performance they listened closely as the shamans sang about a dutiful daughter who was a human sacrifice for calm seas.

Must staging rituals for an audience observing aesthetics or feeling entertained be inherently problematic? Inclusion of shamanic rituals on heritage lists for the nation or the world opens a door to viewing the rituals *without* worrying about intruding: everyone feels permitted to view the ritual without discomfort, hopefully bringing greater understanding of human and cultural diversity as the Convention's framers intended. Gangneung is not the only location where, as ritual continues, belief shifts. In a study on the *dongba* practitioners among China's Naxi people, Zhu Yujie found a lack of concern for the viewer's perception on the part of a ritual specialist (Zhu Y 2012). The Naxi dongba felt the performative authenticity of his actions, leaving the viewers free to construct their own interpretation. David Shorter's study of Yoeme deer dances asserts that they sustained the community in religious identity, not in hides or meat (2007: 285). Just as deer dances can have efficacy that extends beyond obtaining permission to hunt deer,

or a wedding performance for tourists can still be authentic to the performer, there is efficacy in the newly evolving meaning of the Gangneung rituals. Tangibly the ritual in Gangneung has efficacy for filling the local hotels and branding the city. Intangibly, it is part of asserting the value of distinctive local culture, sustaining regional identity and communal pride.

Changes to the festival

Changes to the festival impact even the format we see today. Anthropologist Moon Okpyo explains that Gangneung Danoje is rooted in tradition but has been reconstructed and choreographed, with events added specifically to make it more unique and to "emphasise its authenticity" to the extent that "the festival itself may be understood as an invented tradition in that it had never been practiced in the present-day format before its designation as the Cultural Asset [*sic*]" (1999: 13). Others have similarly pointed out the reconstructed nature of the festival (Choe KS 1989; Hogarth 2001; Kim GS 2010a), but most agree that keeping the festival as it was in the pre-modern era is impossible. Journalist An Gwangseon, who has written extensively on Gangneung Danoje, explains that "folklore is not a must-learn history, it is the way we are living right now" (An GS 2006: 5–6). Strict adherence to a historical model would rob the citizens of Gangneung and the present-day performers of their agency just as much as changes initiated from outside the group of heritage bearers. Interviewing Kim Dongchan, the director of the festival since 2009, I referred to the festival as a "traditional festival" (*jeontong chukje*) and Kim immediately corrected me: "Traditional culture, in the present. It's a modern festival. The background is traditional, but I don't think it's appropriate to call it a traditional festival" (11/12/2015). This conversation with Director Kim made it clear that in Gangneung, through constant contact between the city, the managers of the festival, and the heritage bearers, Gangneung Danoje was not made into an "authentic illusion" (Skounti 2009), nor was it being seen by everyone as a symbol of "pastness" as has troubled other traditions in Korea (Kendall 2009: xxiv).

What does it mean that shamanic rituals are designated national or UNESCO heritage, that UNESCO can be the reason for a ritual performance? I was fascinated by the way the UNESCO listing was foregrounded in the commemorative performance referred to at the beginning of this chapter, and at the 2016 festival. The UNESCO Convention defines intangible cultural heritage and explains that "this intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is *constantly recreated* by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity" [emphasis added].[10] Nowhere in the Convention is there an insistence on reproducing an unchanging historical archetypal version, as Korean law insisted until March 2016.[11] Upon reflection I realized that, before Korean law changed, UNESCO had, for ten years, given the group permission to change and develop their practices as they felt best.

UNESCO listing, in Gangneung's case, had empowered the group vis-à-vis governmental bodies.

Gangneung outsiders, like myself, may find the festival significantly changed between 1999 and 2011, but insiders experienced gradual and practical change, increasingly so as the Preservation Association could play freedoms gained by the UNESCO listing against Korean restrictions, and cooperate with the tourism needs of the region. The Preservation Association and senior heritage bearers are holding tight control of the art. Gangneung city hall has a designated employee responsible for interfacing between city hall and the festival, which eliminates worries that city hall will make decisions about Gangneung Danoje without consulting heritage bearers. The Gangneung City government also funds the Gangneung Cultural Center, responsible for administering and supporting local culture. Sim Oseop, who designates and oversees all activities from his position just under the Cultural Center's director, is also a highly ranked practitioner. He has more than 25 years' experience performing the Confucian ritual, and is finishing a doctoral dissertation on the changes to the festival over the years. Sim explained his position as both working for the government to promote regional culture, and being part of the performance of the culture he promoted:

> As the Korean proverb says, to catch a tiger, you have to go inside the tiger's cave. Hence, to correct the system, you have to be with them. In that way, I can understand what is needed, and what is difficult. Through this, I can explain what I feel and experienced and make suggestions to the government that may be reflected in the policy. Everything should go this way, but Korean intangible cultural heritage groups do not [usually] directly interface with the government. (2/15/2016)

In Gangneung, the embedding of performers within the government, and the resulting cooperation, demonstrates a closer adherence to the UNESCO goal of community involvement in safeguarding than I have encountered almost anywhere else within Korea, even if all parties have cooperated in changes that commodify and touristify the festival that may not have been what the drafters of the Convention intended.

Anthropologist Edward Bruner has written eloquently about performances packaged for visitors after going to Maasai sites that were aiming for "tourist realism, an ambience of authenticity, and the appearance of the real" (2001: 885). The Gangneung performers are much more accepting of signs of modernity than the directors of such staged Maasai experiences. Although this may come at the cost of authenticity according to some definitions, the heritage displayed in Gangneung is not a display of the past, with surface-level artificially preserved 'purity.' The ancient and the modern meet on the stage as prayer papers are burnt, while two young men on each side of the stage quickly turn on shop vacuums, trying to suck the floating clump of once paper, now ash, out of the air before it lands on members of the audience. On the stage a paper sign announces which ritual is underway,

but above and to the side of the stage a moving electronic signboard proclaims the basic information about the ritual in both Korean and English, including the name of the shaman officiating the ceremony. Such changes were initiated by the Preservation Association, seeking to keep the audience both comfortable and informed. Sim Oseop told me that the vacuums were put in place around 2005 and the electronic signboard has been used since 2009, with English added in 2013. He explained "both were adopted after the Preservation Association considered them necessary for the comfort and understanding of the audience members."[12]

The group has stayed in control and worked in close cooperation with the local and national government through changes such as the growth and improvements to the festival grounds that have been upgraded, year by year, until the contemporary festival, still located on the banks of the Namdaecheon River, takes place on paved spaces, on well-maintained grass, and in temporary tent-theatres. This is connected directly to a complex housing the Preservation Association, a large and shiny building, built to match the status of a UNESCO-listed art. It includes a proscenium theatre, mirrored performance practice room, office spaces, and a small museum. These improvements accompany changes in society, and the elevation of the status of the festival. One of those changes is an ever larger market: today at the festival the walkways along the river are lined with booths, and crowded with tourists and locals. Small groups of pre-teen boys slip through the crowd, their hands gripping snacks, couples find solitude in paddle boats on the river, fathers perch kindergarteners on their shoulders to escape the crush of bodies, and old friends in their silver years sit in tent restaurants, deeply engrossed in conversation.

Korean people and society have changed to such an extent that it is unlikely anyone would sleep out on the site. Yet vestiges of decades past persist. Blankets are still sold at the Gangneung Danoje festival, an unusual item compared with the other offerings these days, such as scarves and jewelry from Nepal, kebabs sold by Turks, wind-breakers at cut-rate prices, ginseng and other herbs and tonics, or the Korean flag vendor remarked on by Hyun Key Kim Hogarth (2001: 280).[13] Korean scholars Hwang Rusi (2012) and Kim Giseol (2009) see the growing marketplace as an important part of bringing locals together, and list it with rituals as an integral part of the festival's appeal. Hwang positively states, "Most recently the scale of the commercial tents at the festival has grown bigger, truthfully the items for sale and the function provide a space of emotional liberation" (2012: 22). Kim Giseol (2010a) attributes the changes he has seen in attendees to factors such as transportation—a meet up at the festival is no longer a long-awaited opportunity with good roads, public buses and private cars common—and changes in how Koreans spend their leisure time as their occupations change.

The performers are changing as well. The new characteristics of protected heritage, including the codification of pedagogical transmission, and new UNESCO-driven performance opportunities push performers ever closer to full time professional status, further leading the arts away from the pre-modern model.[14] Gangneung Gwanno Gamyeon'geuk first performed internationally in 2000, and

the shamans performed overseas in 2003, both occasions taking place in Paris. After the UNESCO designation, the sections (individually or together) performed internationally on more than 15 occasions, in countries as diverse as Iran, Russia, Indonesia, and America. These international opportunities are further impetus for performers to eschew non-arts-related employment that could prevent them from having the freedom to travel and perform. This is reflected clearly in the occupations of the performers: every member of the shamanic section with one exception (22 people) and eight members of the mask dance drama section, representing all the younger members, have no employment outside of the culture and arts field.[15] The increase in staged performance outside the festival context, and professionalization of the performers, has followed UNESCO listing. Gangneung Danoje Preservation Association, one of the first UNESCO-listed heritage items in Korea, expanded the breadth and scope of their activities significantly as they prepared for listing and after they gained their new title.

The extended performance opportunities in contexts that are not embedded within the local meanings of the festival, or even in front of audiences that share the same culture, impact the heritage items. Domestic and international audiences provide different feedback, and in the long term this may drive other changes. For example, in overseas performances of the mask dance drama, the dramatized sexual assault and subsequent victim-blaming by her partner that drives Somae Gaksi to commit suicide is played down.[16] Foreign audiences may understand this as a tale of the power of the spirits housed in the sacred tree that can bring her back to life, but perhaps not the cultural reasons for her suicide. Finally, commodification can even push the performance to be more 'exotic,' as more exotic, mysterious, and fantastic items of heritage can draw new audiences (Roberts 1993; Yun KI 2006: 16; Price 2007). In front of an audience consuming ritual as entertainment, shamans may focus on the most showy and dramatic elements, and (except for during the annual festival) they must conform to concert hall schedules. Such shorter and showier performances by the shamanic section are now staged regularly.

Conclusion

Even a successful and locally supported art like this one still faces many challenges. The Preservation Association has sought out employees who share their vision, like Kim Dongchan, and work towards common goals with the local government, but transmission to the future is an ever-present issue. Attending the mask dance drama's performances at the festival I had been excited to see the large number of young people who were actively watching in the audience, but Kim Mungyeom informed me that these students were those who had previously participated in intensive courses in the art. Kim explained that when speaking to an ordinary student, their response to the art was just a relaxed affirmation of the UNESCO status; "it's just a casual, almost unimpressed reaction. People worry about getting jobs after graduation—that feels more urgent. Even now, the people who are learning, after they graduate they may be too busy to keep practicing" (interview

11/12/2016, follow up 6/9/2016). Heritage is an "act of making meaning in and for the present" (Smith 2006: 1), but the short and non-verbal mask dance drama, telling a story of bandits, a spirit, and an old-fashioned relationship cannot easily adjust to present-day realities like high youth unemployment. It is the festival itself, particularly the shamanic ritual, that is being reframed to maintain *a* meaning if not *the* historic meaning. The shamans, musicians, and audience still engage with the ritual—some prioritizing a link to the past, seeing "cultural-historical authenticity," others feeling the "experiential authenticity" of a "performance [that] establishes relations between people and physical places" (Bigenho 2002: 16–17). Meanwhile the festival, deriving part of its power from its continued efficacy as a tourist draw card, urgently feels the need to continue reinventing itself. Kim Dongchan explained the need to engage teenagers in the festival through offering hip-hop dance competitions in addition to pungmul drumming contests, offering special activities for foreign tourists, and allowing changes in aspects of the festival to reflect the changing times. Kim's job also entails the difficult balancing act of managing a successful cultural festival with decidedly commercialized elements, and satisfying the preservation agenda for the Confucian rituals, shamanic ceremonies and mask dance drama at the core.

If in Gangneung the heritage bearers remain in control of the presentation of their art, is the shift towards a festival for tourism instead of festival for agricultural success a failure in cultural preservation? The degree to which Gangneung city and the Preservation Association for the Festival cooperate is exemplary, but as Gangneung, the province, the nation and now UNESCO each seek to find within the festival their own benefits, it will require strength and fortitude for the Preservation Association to keep control. For Gangneung, the downward trend in tourism to the city is a serious financial issue, one that Gangneung seeks to address with, as mentioned earlier, the creation of additional tourism resources such as the coffee festival and development of beach-related infrastructure. The Preservation Association needs to demonstrate that the Dano Festival continues to repay local investment with the power of its unique and internationally recognized image. They must simultaneously promote the commercialization of the heritage festival and protect the beauty and value of their art from becoming so over-utilized in regional branding imagery that it loses the 'wow' factor that draws the attention of the public. The changes in Korean society that have eliminated the traditional context have turned the festival into an event honoring traditions and highlighting regional identity, as part of the contemporary world. Negotiations may be ongoing between performers, heritage officials, and the city of Gangneung, but at the moment Gangneung Danoje's Preservation Association remains in control of how their heritage is presented.

Immersing myself in Gangneung Danoje, I began to become deeply concerned that the shamanic rituals were losing their core meaning as those who put their faith in shamanic rituals for agricultural fecundity are primarily elderly, soon to pass on. As I was writing, I thought back to the enthusiasm for the festival and its component parts that I had observed in Gangneung, heard in my interviews, and

had been inundated with as I read the Korean scholarship on Gangneung Danoje. If heritage is about communicating cultural ideas, even as they change through the generations (Smith 2006), then Gangneung Danoje seems to be doing it right. The engagement with the festival is still strong, but perhaps it has shifted towards anthropologist Llorenc Prats' characterization of cultural heritage as a sort of "lay religion" (2009: 78). Gangneung's representative cultural heritage sets the city apart—grounding regional identity while it serves as a boon to the local economy. The ritual, instead of ensuring plenty through agricultural bounty, now plays a role in ensuring economic growth through regional distinctiveness. For some, belief in the festival as a representative of Gangneung replaces the certainty that shamanic rites, performed well, bring prosperity.

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Notes

1 The key figure is the Gangneung-protecting state preceptor, a conflation of two individuals (see Hogarth 2001).
2 Under Korean heritage law there are four levels of heritage bearers—student, *isuja* (performer or artist), *jeonsu gyoyuk jogyo* (teacher), and finally National Human Treasure. Rank exams are judged by heritage experts, the system ends in death or voluntary retirement.
3 According to the Preservation Association's data compiled in the internal document "*jeonggi chonghoi hoiuijaryo*" (General Meeting Data) for a meeting on March 4th, 2015, in 2014 the festival operated on 144,868,200—90,000,000 won from the CHA, just as in 2015. For comparison, the Yeongsanjae Buddhist ceremony (UNESCO listed in 2009) received 13,000,000 won in 2014 for their annual full-day ceremony, and Jongmyo Jerye Confucian ceremony (listed in 2001) received 170,000,000 won in 2014 for their one-day ceremony (UNESCO Korea 2015).
4 The ceremony from the vignette demonstrated remarkable inter-group cooperation: Gangneung shamans reached out to the entire network of East Coast ritual practitioners. The *o-gu-gut* alternated performances by the Gangneung Danoje, Donghae-an Byeolsingut, Busan Gijang O-gu-gut, and Yanghae Byeolsin'gut Noli groups. The four are UNESCO, nationally, and (the last two) regionally designated.
5 The *2014 Statistical Yearbook of Gangneung City* also stated that Gangneung's 2002 population was 230,714.
6 The facilities for tourists are being improved, as shown in the *Yearbook*'s tracking of quality of hotel rooms, transportation options, and facilities at beaches, hot springs, and so on.

7 Attendance at the festival cannot be tracked—it is free and there are dozens of entry points.
8 According to the Korea Tourism Organization and Statistics Korea, Korean departures for foreign trips has increased from 11,610,000 in 2006 to 16,070,000 in 2014. See Statistics Korea: www.index.go.kr/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1655. Accessed on 6/28/2016.
9 Farming, fishing and forestry work employed 9.8 percent of the economically active population of the city in 2013, a substantial decrease in these traditional Gangwon Province occupations. Meanwhile service and sales employed 23 percent, managers and professional workers, office workers, and factory workers each accounted for approximately 18 percent of workers.
10 The Convention is available at www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention. Accessed on 7/15/2016.
11 The most recent version of the CPPL (Law number 12352), revised in 2014 with the changes effective as of January 29th, 2015, explains: Third article: (essential guidelines) cultural heritage must be protected, managed and utilized in accordance with maintaining the archetypal form.
12 Personal communication via Kakao message platform, 7/8/2016.
13 Booths vary by area, with sections for food, experiential and educational activities, and an open-air market. Applicants can be turned down when they apply for a booth to the festival management team overseen by Kim Dongchan, but in practice this is relatively unusual.
14 I have briefly addressed artist professionalization before (Saeji 2015); it is also a major theme in my forthcoming book on Korean mask dance dramas and heritage.
15 The data on participant occupation was shared by the *bojonhoe*'s Kim Sanggyun. Most full-time professionals teach through the government-funded rotating *gugak* instructor program, or directly for the *bojonhoe*. Most members of the ritual section are past retirement age.
16 According to mask dance drama *isuja* Kim Mun-gyeom, 11/12/2015.

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